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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8173  
INFO RUCNSOM/SOMALIA COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RUEPVAA/COMJSOC FT BRAGG NC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE  
RHMFIUU/CJTF HOA IMMEDIATE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 7458

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SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/E AND A/S FRAZER

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SOMALIA - PUNTLAND ELECTS PRESIDENT IN PEACEFUL  
ELECTION

REF: NAIROBI 40

11. (U) Summary. Abdirahman Mohamed Faroole secured 49 or 66 votes from Parliament on January 8, and was elected as Puntland's next President. The election was reportedly fair and free of major scandals. The election of Faroole, who was not among Abdullahi Yusuf's chosen candidates, represents a diminishing of Yusuf's influence in Puntland and, some say, in Somali politics overall. End summary.

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Faroole Elected  
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12. (U) Abdirahman Mohamed Faroole, an Australian citizen who is from the Darod/Kabalah/Harti/Majerteen/Mohamud Saleebaan clan, won 49 of 66 votes in the January 8 Puntland presidential election. Faroole had previously been involved in Somalia and Puntland politics, including a stint as Puntland Finance Minister when Abdullahi Yusuf was Puntland President, but had reportedly had a falling-out with Yusuf and went to Australia for some time. He returned to Puntland early in 2008 to run for President. Citizens of Garowe, Faroole's hometown, reportedly felt it was "their turn," since the previous two Presidents, Yusuf and Hersi, came from rival Puntland urban centers of Galkayo and Bossaso.

13. (U) Shortly after Faroole's election, Abdisamad Ali Shire was elected Vice President. Shire is from the Harti/Dolbahante clan, as was the previous vice President. He reportedly also was not Yusuf's preferred choice.

14. (U) The election was reportedly free of major scandals, and we have received no reports of violence. Reports indicate that reaction among Puntlanders has been generally positive. While the conflict in Sool and Sanaag regions was a plank in the platform of all of the candidates, there is no indication that the outcome of this election will intensify the border dispute with Somaliland.

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Stark Contrast to the Incumbent  
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15. (U) Contacts also expressed optimism that Faroole's economic background, especially his stint as Finance Minister, could mean more attention to Puntland's struggling economy.

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Yusuf Allies Rebuffed

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¶6. (U) Recently-resigned Transitional Federal Government (TFG) President Abdullahi Yusuf had returned to Puntland to "oversee" the election. While he had declared neutrality in the race, many speculated that he had supported certain candidates, none of whom won either the President or Vice President slot. Observers note that Yusuf's diminished influence in Puntland - one went so far as to declare an "anti-Yusuf climate" - may well be a positive development. In addition, contacts say Yusuf's apparent lack of influence in Puntland underlines his lessened influence in Somalia as a whole, and could be he is less well positioned to disrupt the Djibouti Process, should he want to do so.  
RANNEBERGER